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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6322

INFO RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 2920

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000660

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/16/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: MOROCCO: AMBASSADOR RILEY MEETS WITH WALI IN CASABLANCA

REF: A. RABAT 658

[1](#)B. RABAT 657

[1](#)C. RABAT 656

Classified By: Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Wayne J. Bush for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: On April 15, the Ambassador met with the Wali of Casablanca to discuss Consulate and Dar America security measures following the previous day's suicide bombings. Ambassador emphasized the importance of reducing traffic on the streets surrounding the Consulate and Dar America. The Wali suggested that the targets were not necessarily American, and closing the streets would not prevent similar attacks. End Summary.

2.(C) Ambassador Riley, accompanied by CG, RSO and MGMT officer, met April 15 with Casablanca Wali Mohamed Kabbaj, the Kings senior administrator in Casablanca, to review security measures at the Consulate and Dar America in the aftermath of the April 14 suicide bombings near the Consulate and American Language Center.

3.(C) The Ambassador:

--Thanked the Wali for additional security support over recent months and in the immediate aftermath of Saturday's attacks;
--Noted that, in response to our previous requests that the Wali consider steps to reduce the threat created by large amounts of traffic on the major street in front of the Consulate, no action had been taken;
--Emphasized the importance of Boulevard Moulay Youssef remaining closed (it has been closed since the morning of April 14); and that similar measures be taken on the lesser streets leading to the square in front of Dar America;
--Stressed the importance of the problem, since the U.S. is a target in Morocco.

4.(C) The Wali:

--Expressed confidence in the capability of the police to disrupt major terrorist attacks;
--Downplayed the significance of Saturday's attacks, describing the bombers as "beginners" and "amateurs" using "traditional materials" available openly. The two bombers were brothers who were electricians;
--Said that the Saturday attacks indicated that the terrorists are feeling the pressure of successful police investigations and are resorting to desperate attacks with no results;
--Indicated that the terrorists had no special training and that it was a small network - he does not think there are others in it;
--Suggested that the targets were not necessarily American. Near the Consulate, the bomber targeted a police van (containing the rapid reaction force stationed across the street from the Consulate). It appears his objective was the

police, not the Consulate. If it had been the Consulate, why would he have chosen Saturday?

--Asserted that the terrorists are reacting to police pressure and just want to create fear. There are several important sites in the area of the bombings, including banks, a synagogue, and businesses;

--Said that the terrorists are not aiming at the population or people, just symbols - the police, state institutions, and "international" symbols.

5.(C) On street closings the Wali said:

--Closing the streets won't prevent attacks of this type;

--In the case of the May, 2003 bombings in Casablanca (when the street was closed, or partially closed, for several months), the attacks which provoked the closing were "much more serious";

--Asserted that "it's not just a street - it's a central artery in the city" and traffic problems would be huge if closed;

--Indicated that street closure would be counterproductive from a political point of view - public reaction would be negative;

--It's a question of probabilities and the kind of attack in question is not the biggest risk. There is political will to prevent the more serious risks, like vehicle bombs, and things in Morocco would not be like those in Algeria.

6.(C) On solutions:

--The Wali said that there are about 80 security personnel assigned to duties 24/7 in the area of the Consulate down to the American Language Center. There is undoubtedly room for improvement and new ways of deploying them in more visible, dynamic sense (inspection of pedestrians, for example). If the U.S. has proposals, put them forward - there is flexibility and interest in improvement. Security authorities are ready to reinforce, reorganize, redeploy to

create a more secure environment around the Consulate and Dar America. Open to other solutions;

--The Wali indicated he was prepared to assist the Consulate to move to another location, but the Ambassador noted that that was not a solution for the short-medium term;

--The Ambassador tested the Wali's willingness to close half of the street and the median strip to traffic (if done, creating close to 80 - 100 feet of setback). The Wali did not reject the idea outright, but one of his colleagues indicated that it would not work;

--The Wali said it was important to get his specialists together with ours to discuss options (beyond closing Boulevard Moulay-Youssef;

--Ambassador concluded by reiterating that security is our top priority and that the Consulate would be closed to the public tomorrow while our security experts evaluate what can be done to create the conditions necessary to re-open to the public. This remains a serious concern - we will study it and see if alternative solutions could meet our needs. If not, we would continue to pursue closure of Boulevard Moulay Youssef.

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